

An Analysis of Loneliness and the Contributing Variables Among College Students

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Literature Review

- Loneliness
 - *Subjective experience*
 - *Broad social construct*
- Highly prevalent and growing issue
 - *College students are particularly at risk* (Mullen et al., 2019)
- Severe condition
 - *Physical and psychological health* (Valtorta et al., 2016)
 - *Depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation* (Park et al., 2020)

Current Study

- 18 contributing variables identified from the literature
- Pertinent to understand student's perspectives
 - *Variables affect students differently*
- Development goals
 - *Operational definition of the concept of loneliness*
 - *Intervention manuals*
 - *New loneliness instrument (SSCI)*

Variables

Geographic Location

Life Transitions

Chronic Illness/Handicapped

Problems with Speech/Articulation

Interests do not Match Social Norms

Grief/Loss

Fear of Rejection/Insecurity

Social Anxiety

Lack of Social Motivation

Lack of Identity

Conflicting Priorities

Lack of Social Skills

Negative Self-Talk

Negative Outlook on Life

Bullying/Mistreatment

Social Exclusion

Social Media/Technology

Manipulation

Research Questions

1. Which participants are lonely versus non-lonely?
1. Do lonely and non-lonely students differ in their rank-ordered lists on the loneliness Concept Builder?
1. What causal variables do lonely people implicitly believe contribute the most to loneliness?

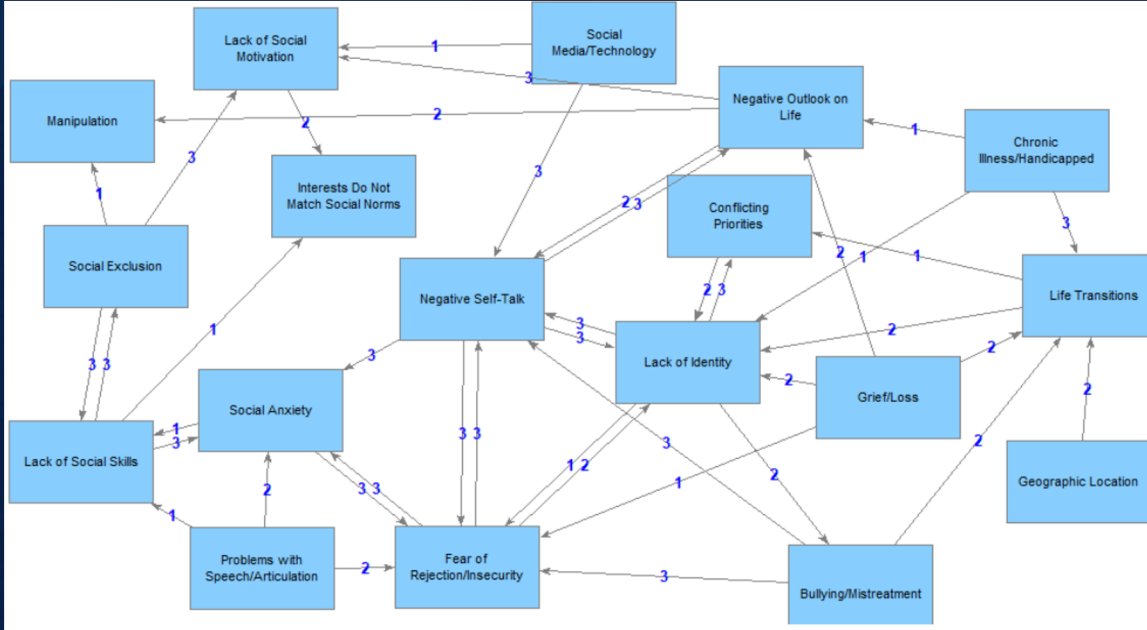
Participants

- **Sample size**
 - $n = 249$
- **Qualifications**
 - *18 years of age or older*
 - *Liberty University residential undergraduate student*
 - *Enrolled in a residential undergraduate psychology course*
- **Compensation**
 - *3 psychology activity credits*

Methods

- **Study design**
 - *Quantitative*
 - *Cross-sectional*
- **Materials**
 - *Demographic Survey*
 - *R-UCLA Loneliness Scale*
 - *Student Social Capital Instrument (SSCI)*
 - *Loneliness Right Now (LRN)*
 - *Concept Builder (CB) software*

Example Concept Map



Rank	Contributing Factor
1	Negative Self-Talk
2	Lack of Identity
3	Bullying/Mistreatment
4	Fear of Rejection/Insecurity
5	Grief/Loss
6	Social Media/Technology
7	Social Anxiety
8	Problems with Speech/Articulation
9	Life Transitions
10	Chronic Illness/Handicapped
11	Negative Outlook on Life
12	Conflicting Priorities
13	Lack of Social Skills
14	Social Exclusion
15	Geographic Location
16	Lack of Social Motivation
17	Interests Do Not Match Social Norms
17	Manipulation

Results

- **SSCI**

- *High convergent validity*
 - *R-UCLA* $r=.803$
 - *LRN* $r=.710$

- **Loneliness levels**

- *Moderately* 28.1%
- *Severely* 12.4%

- **Demographics**



- *Age 18-24* 98%
- *Female* 70%
- *On-campus* 69.5%
- *First year* 48.6%
- *Part-time employment* 40.2%
- *Caucasian/White* 83.1%
- *SBS major* 55%

Further Analyses



- **Mann Whitney U test**
 - *Lonely vs non-lonely*
- **Psychometric analyses**
 - *SSCI*
 - *Exploratory factor analysis*
 - *Cronbach's alpha*
- **Correlation analysis**
 - *SSCI and Concept Builder*

Conclusions



Average Ranking of Determinants for Severely Lonely Participants

Rank	Contributing Factor
1	 Social Anxiety
2	Bullying/Mistreatment
3	Chronic Illness/Handicapped
4	Lack of Social Skills
5	 Social Media/Technology
6	Negative Outlook on Life
7	Fear of Rejection/Insecurity
8	Interests do not Match Social Norms
9	Grief/Loss
10	Problems with Speech/Articulation
11	Life Transitions
12	Lack of Identity
13	Negative Self-Talk
14	Social Exclusion
15	Manipulation
16	Geographic Location
17	Conflicting Priorities
18	Lack of Social Motivation

Determinants of Loneliness for Moderately Lonely People

Rank	Contributing Factor
1	Bullying/Mistreatment
2	Chronic Illness/Handicapped
3	Lack of Social Skills
4	 Social Media/Technology
5	 Social Anxiety
6	Life Transitions
7	Fear of Rejection/Insecurity
8	Geographic Location
9	Interests do not Match Social Norms
10	Problems with Speech/Articulation
11	Grief/Loss
12	Social Exclusion
13	Negative Self-Talk
14	Lack of Identity
15	Lack of Social Motivation
16	Conflicting Priorities
17	Negative Outlook on Life
18	Manipulation

Determinants of Loneliness for Non-lonely People

Rank	Contributing Factor
1	Bullying/Mistreatment
2	Lack of Identity
3	Geographic Location
4	Problems with Speech/Articulation
5	 Social Media/Technology
6	Chronic Illness/Handicapped
7	Grief/Loss
8	Interests do not Match Social Norms
9	Lack of Social Skills
10	Negative Self-Talk
11	Life Transitions
12	Fear of Rejection/Insecurity
13	 Social Anxiety
14	Lack of Social Motivation
15	Conflicting Priorities
16	Manipulation
17	Social Exclusion
18	Negative Outlook on Life

Discussion

- **Limitations**
 - *Niche set of participants*
 - *Convenience sample*
 - *Cross-sectional design*
- **Recommendations**
 - *Distribute the SSCI to LUO students*
 - *Assess professors, faculty, staff, and campus leadership*
 - *Develop personalized interventions*
- **In Progress**
 - *Conduct qualitative interviews*

References

- Mullen, A. R., Tong, S., Sabo, R. T., Liaw, W. R., Marshall, J., Nease Jr, D. E., Krist, A. H., & Frey 3rd, J. J. (2019). Loneliness in primary care patients: A prevalence study. *Annals of Family Medicine*, *17*(2), 108-115. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2358>
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- Valtorta, N. K., Kanaan, M., Gilbody, S., Ronzi, S., & Hanratty, B. (2016). Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke: Systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal observational studies. *Heart*, *102*, 1009-1016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/heartjnl-2015-308790>

Questions?

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